

This is an extract of the IUCN publication “Guidelines for Protected Area Management Categories”. If you would like to order this publication please contact:

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Guidelines for Protected Area Management Categories

Part II

The Management Categories

This part of the guidelines examines each of the six categories in turn and considers them under the following headings:

- Definition
- Objectives of Management
- Guidance for Selection
- Organizational Responsibility
- Equivalent Category in 1978 System

CATEGORY I Strict Nature Reserve/Wilderness Area: protected area managed mainly for science or wilderness protection

CATEGORY Ia Strict Nature Reserve: protected area managed mainly for science

Definition

Area of land and/or sea possessing some outstanding or representative ecosystems, geological or physiological features and/or species, available primarily for scientific research and/or environmental monitoring.

Objectives of Management

- to preserve habitats, ecosystems and species in as undisturbed a state as possible;
- to maintain genetic resources in a dynamic and evolutionary state;
- to maintain established ecological processes;
- to safeguard structural landscape features or rock exposures;
- to secure examples of the natural environment for scientific studies, environmental monitoring and education, including baseline areas from which all avoidable access is excluded;
- to minimise disturbance by careful planning and execution of research and other approved activities; and
- to limit public access.

Guidance for Selection

- The area should be large enough to ensure the integrity of its ecosystems and to accomplish the management objectives for which it is protected.
- The area should be significantly free of direct human intervention and capable of remaining so.
- The conservation of the area's biodiversity should be achievable through protection and not require substantial active management or habitat manipulation (c.f. Category IV).

Organizational Responsibility

Ownership and control should be by the national or other level of government, acting through a professionally qualified agency, or by a private foundation, university or institution which has an established research or conservation function, or by owners working in cooperation with any of the foregoing government or private institutions. Adequate safeguard and controls relating to long-term protection should be secured before designation. International agreements over areas subject to disputed national sovereignty can provide exceptions (e.g. Antarctica).

Equivalent Category in 1978 System

Scientific Reserve / Strict Nature Reserve

CATEGORY Ib Wilderness Area: protected area managed mainly for wilderness protection

Definition

Large area of unmodified or slightly modified land, and/or sea, retaining its natural character and influence, without permanent or significant habitation, which is protected and managed so as to preserve its natural condition.

Objectives of Management

- to ensure that future generations have the opportunity to experience understanding and enjoyment of areas that have been largely undisturbed by human action over a long period of time;
- to maintain the essential natural attributes and qualities of the environment over the long term;
- to provide for public access at levels and of a type which will serve best the physical and spiritual well-being of visitors and maintain the wilderness qualities of the area for present and future generations; and
- to enable indigenous human communities living at low density and in balance with the available resources to maintain their life style.

Guidance for Selection

- The area should possess high natural quality, be governed primarily by the forces of nature, with human disturbance substantially absent and be likely to continue to display those attributes if managed as proposed.
- The area should contain significant ecological, geological, physiogeographic, or other features of scientific, educational, scenic or historic value.
- The area should offer outstanding opportunities for solitude, enjoyed once the area has been reached, by simple, quiet, non-polluting and non-intrusive means of travel (i.e. non-motorised).
- The area should be of sufficient size to make practical such preservation and use.

Organizational Responsibility

As for Sub-Category Ia.

Equivalent Category in 1978 System

This sub-category did not appear in the 1978 system, but has been introduced following the IUCN General Assembly Resolution (16/34) on Protection of Wilderness Resources and Values, adopted at the 1984 General Assembly in Madrid, Spain.

CATEGORY II National Park: protected area managed mainly for ecosystem protection and recreation

Definition

Natural area of land and/or sea, designated to (a) protect the ecological integrity of one or more ecosystems for present and future generations, (b) exclude exploitation or occupation inimical to the purposes of designation of the area and (c) provide a foundation for spiritual, scientific, educational, recreational and visitor opportunities, all of which must be environmentally and culturally compatible.

Objectives of Management

- to protect natural and scenic areas of national and international significance for spiritual, scientific, educational, recreational or tourist purposes;
- to perpetual, in as natural a state as possible, representative examples of physiographic regions, biotic communities, genetic resources, and species, to provide ecological stability and diversity;
- to manage visitor use for inspirational, educational, cultural and recreational purposes at a level which will maintain the area in a natural or near natural state;
- to eliminate and thereafter prevent exploitation or occupation inimical to the purposes of designation;
- to maintain respect for the ecological, geomorphologic, sacred or aesthetic attributes which warranted designation; and
- to take into account the needs of indigenous people, including subsistence resource use, in so far as these will not adversely affect the other objectives of management.

Guidance for Selection

- The area should contain a representative sample of major natural regions, features or scenery, where plant and animal species, habitats and geomorphological sites are of special spiritual, scientific, educational, recreational and tourist significance.
- The area should be large enough to contain one or more entire ecosystems not materially altered by current human occupation or exploitation.

Organizational Responsibility

Ownership and management should normally be by the highest competent authority of the nation having jurisdiction over it. However, they may also be vested in another level of government, council of indigenous people, foundation or other legally established body which has dedicated the area to long-term conservation.

Equivalent Category in 1978 System

National Park

CATEGORY III Natural Monument: protected area managed mainly for conservation of specific natural features

Definition

Area containing one, or more, specific natural or natural/cultural feature which is of outstanding or unique value because of its inherent rarity, representative or aesthetic qualities or cultural significance.

Objectives of Management

- to protect or preserve in perpetuity specific outstanding natural features because of their natural significance, unique or representational quality, and/or spiritual connotations;
- to an extent consistent with the foregoing objective, to provide opportunities for research, education, interpretation and public appreciation;
- to eliminate and thereafter prevent exploitation or occupation inimical to the purpose of designation; and
- to deliver to any resident population such benefits as are consistent with the other objectives of management.

Guidance for Selection

- The area should contain one or more features of outstanding significance (appropriate natural features include spectacular waterfalls, caves, craters, fossil beds, sand dunes and marine features, along with unique or representative fauna and flora; associated cultural features might include cave dwellings, cliff-top forts, archaeological sites, or natural sites which have heritage significance to indigenous peoples).
- The area should be large enough to protect the integrity of the feature and its immediately related surroundings.

Organizational Responsibility

Ownership and management should be by the national government or, with appropriate safeguards and controls, by another level of government, council of indigenous people, non-profit trust, corporation or, exceptionally, by a private body, provided the long-term protection of the inherent character of the area is assured before designation.

Equivalent Category in 1978 System

Natural Monument / Natural Landmark

CATEGORY IV Habitat/Species Management Area: protected area managed mainly for conservation through management intervention

Definition

Area of land and/or sea subject to active intervention for management purposes so as to ensure the maintenance of habitats and/or to meet the requirements of specific species.

Objectives of Management

- to secure and maintain the habitat conditions necessary to protect significant species, groups of species, biotic communities or physical features of the environment where these require specific human manipulation for optimum management;
- to facilitate scientific research and environmental monitoring as primary activities associated with sustainable resource management;
- to develop limited areas for public education and appreciation of the characteristics of the habitats concerned and of the work of wildlife management;
- to eliminate and thereafter prevent exploitation or occupation inimical to the purposes of designation; and
- to deliver such benefits to people living within the designated area as are consistent with the other objectives of management.

Guidance for Selection

- The area should play an important role in the protection of nature and the survival of species, (incorporating, as appropriate, breeding areas, wetlands, coral reefs, estuaries, grasslands, forests or spawning areas, including marine feeding beds).
- The area should be one where the protection of the habitat is essential to the well-being of nationally or locally-important flora, or to resident or migratory fauna.
- Conservation of these habitats and species should depend upon active intervention by the management authority, if necessary through habitat manipulation (c.f. Category Ia).
- The size of the area should depend on the habitat requirements of the species to be protected and may range from relatively small to very extensive.

Organizational Responsibility

Ownership and management should be by the national government or, with appropriate safeguards and controls, by another level of government, non-profit trust, corporation, private group or individual.

Equivalent Category in 1978 System

Nature Conservation Reserve / Managed Nature Reserve / Wildlife Sanctuary

CATEGORY V Protected Landscape/Seascape: protected area managed mainly for landscape/seascape conservation and recreation

Definition

Area of land, with coast and sea as appropriate, where the interaction of people and nature over time has produced an area of distinct character with significant aesthetic, ecological and/or cultural value, and often with high biological diversity. Safeguarding the integrity of this traditional interaction is vital to the protection, maintenance and evolution of such an area.

Objectives of Management

- to maintain the harmonious interaction of nature and culture through the protection of landscape and/or seascape and the continuation of traditional land uses, building practices and social and cultural manifestations;
- to support lifestyles and economic activities which are in harmony with nature and the preservation of the social and cultural fabric of the communities concerned;
- to maintain the diversity of landscape and habitat, and of associated species and ecosystems;
- to eliminate where necessary, and thereafter prevent, land uses and activities which are inappropriate in scale and/or character;
- to provide opportunities for public enjoyment through recreation and tourism appropriate in type and scale to the essential qualities of the areas;
- to encourage scientific and educational activities which will contribute to the long term well-being of resident populations and to the development of public support for the environmental protection of such areas; and
- to bring benefits to, and to contribute to the welfare of, the local community through the provision of natural products (such as forest and fisheries products) and services (such as clean water or income derived from sustainable forms of tourism).

Guidance for Selection

- The area should possess a landscape and/or coastal and island seascape of high scenic quality, with diverse associated habitats, flora and fauna along with manifestations of unique or traditional land-use patterns and social organisations as evidenced in human settlements and local customs, livelihoods, and beliefs.
- The area should provide opportunities for public enjoyment through recreation and tourism within its normal lifestyle and economic activities.

Organizational Responsibility

The area may be owned by a public authority, but is more likely to comprise a mosaic of private and public ownerships operating a variety of management regimes. These regimes should be subject to a degree of planning or other control and supported, where appropriate, by public funding and other incentives, to ensure that the quality of the landscape/seascape and the relevant local customs and beliefs are maintained in the long term.

Equivalent Category in 1978 System

Protected Landscape

CATEGORY VI Managed Resource Protected Area: protected area managed mainly for the sustainable use of natural ecosystems

Definition

Area containing predominantly unmodified natural systems, managed to ensure long term protection and maintenance of biological diversity, while providing at the same time a sustainable flow of natural products and services to meet community needs.

Objectives of Management

- to protect and maintain the biological diversity and other natural values of the area in the long term;
- to promote sound management practices for sustainable production purposes;
- to protect the natural resource base from being alienated for other land-use purposes that would be detrimental to the area's biological diversity; and
- to contribute to regional and national development.

Guidance for Selection

- The area should be at least two-thirds in a natural condition, although it may also contain limited areas of modified ecosystems; large commercial plantations would *not* be appropriate for inclusion,
- The area should be large enough to absorb sustainable resource uses without detriment to its overall long-term natural values.

Organizational Responsibility

Management should be undertaken by public bodies with a unambiguous remit for conservation, and carried out in partnership with the local community; or management may be provided through local custom supported and advised by governmental or non-governmental agencies. Ownership may be by the national or other level of government, the community, private individuals, or a combination of these.

Equivalent Category in 1978 System

This category does not correspond directly with any of those in the 1978 system, although it is likely to include some areas previously classified as “Resource Reserves”, “Natural Biotic Areas/Anthropological Reserves” and “Multiple Use Management Areas / Managed Resource Areas”.